



IS THE WEST WORTH WHILE?

BY
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A CANDID REVIEW OF THE ECONOMIC PROBLEMS
OF WESTERN CANADA, AND THE URGENT NEED
FOR CO-OPERATIVE ACTION BY THE EAST AND THE
WEST IN THE INTERESTS OF NATIONAL PROGRESS

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*Canada needs more of Progress and less of Politics;
more of Push and less of Prattle.*

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS



URING a recent conversation about Western Canada, a gentleman who is fairly prominent in the business life of Ontario's great metropolis frankly said:

"While I know where the West is, and the names of its Provinces, I must confess that I know practically nothing about conditions out there. I have never been in the West and have paid very little attention to its problems. These have always seemed too far away to concern me."

Yet this gentleman is associated with a concern whose products are sold extensively in the West. In fact, if the Western market were removed for these products his business would fall flatter than the proverbial pancake.

However, he is but one of thousands who "know where the West is, but know nothing about the West."

Quite recently the writer was informed as follows by an Ottawa cabinet minister:

"O, yes, there are a number of quite pressing problems confronting the West. In fact, the problem of transportation is serious, very serious; but then, you know, the Western wheat States are having a hard time, too. We must not be impatient; it takes time, plenty of time, to correct the conditions on our prairies; it cannot be done in a day."

Cannot be done in a day!

And in twenty years the Dominion of Canada's increase of population is nearly 200,000 less than the number of immigrants who have landed upon our shores in that period.

Isn't it about time that some attempt were being made to answer the question, "Is the West Worth While?"—a question that is being heard with a disturbingly increased frequency. The reason for it will become apparent in the pages that follow. Probably, however, the

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best answer to the question, from the logical national viewpoint, is to ask another:

"Is the Dominion of Canada worth while?"

But if the East is more or less thoughtless about Western problems, the West, too, has a lot to learn about tackling its difficulties in the fashion that will bring about the utmost good.

A tremendous amount of loose talk is being indulged in by both geographical extremes. There is too much of self-centered interest, too much of unintelligent prattling, too much of political intrigue.

We need, certainly, to get together for a mutual realization of the natural affinity which exists between East and West if there is to be national development and prosperity in proportion to the actual and potential possibilities we possess.

Fundamentally, there is nothing seriously wrong with our Canadian citizenship. The innate national conscience is still working faithfully on all cylinders; it is our national conception that is missing fire. Well-meant energies are misdirected because of a confined outlook, a limited understanding of broad questions, a blind subservience to party or class mandates, and a patriotism complacency in ordinary life that is almost unpardonable in a courageous, virile people.

The time has come to pinch ourselves into a vigorous, waking realization that every true Canadian has a part to play in placing Canada in a forefront position among the nations of the earth, instead of being a handmaid to the United States and a constant suppliant at the Throne of the Motherland. To speak in the vernacular, Canada is twenty years behind the times—twenty years of time-serving lost to the land we love, the land that possesses resources of an extent and variety such as no other land can boast.

But we can never get anywhere until the gap between the West and the East is bridged.

With millions upon millions of arable acres yet to be developed, with mineral deposits of fabulous wealth as yet undisturbed, with waters and forests and furs beyond financial computation, there is, to say the least, need for some immediate, energetic action looking toward the aggressive development of the Canadian West.

In the following pages an effort is made to bring home to the people of Canada some basic understanding of existing Western problems, and some simple, basic suggestions for assisting in solutions thereto.

"Is the West Worth While?" is not intended to harangue or to scold. Its object is constructive, and if through a frank analysis of the subject treated there may be a few thousand more Canadians enrolled in the ranks of the "Advance, Canada!" army then the mission of the author will have been accomplished. A native of Eastern Canada, the writer has resided in the West for the past twenty years,

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and has during that time been intimately in touch with general Western economic conditions. He is persuaded that the time has come when further dilly-dallying with the nation's logical ultimate destiny will be fraught with some very distasteful consequences.

It may be that some readers will be amazed at certain statements set forth in this pamphlet; others may be skeptical. But if you feel there is any impossible, exaggerated or inaccurate assertion it is suggested that you spend a few minutes studying the population and immigration statistics of Canada for the past ten or twenty years. The result will give you a severe economic jolt if you are in any way responsive to such a trivial matter as Canada's future and the reasons she is lagging in the race of Progress.

East and West, Canadians all have an imminent responsibility to discharge in order that national prosperity may be assured and unanimous.

And the greatest duty devolving upon each of us to discharge is to Think and Talk, with faith, sincerity and determination, for the Greater Canada that is to be.

Swift Current, Saskatchewan.
August 20th, 1923.

A. S. BENNETT

*"Oh, East is East, and West is West,
and never the twain shall meet"*

OR

*Oh, East is West, and West is East,
and ever as one their hearts shall beat ?*

Is the West Worth While?



ELL, the 'Wild men from the West' have sure gone and raised hell now."

With solemn visage, and hands uplifted in an air of hopeless resignation, an Eastern politician gave voice to the above conviction at the close of a particularly stressful sitting before the Parliamentary Agricultural Committee at Ottawa, during the recent session of the House of Commons.

The remark, prompted as it was by pessimistic statements on Western Agricultural conditions from Progressive members before the Committee, seemed perfectly justified.

Was not the press almost a unit in applying such epithets as "calamity howlers" and "apostles of blue ruin" to the Western wittinesses, who, with loud and sustained vigor, disturbed the acoustics of the parliamentary chambers by unaccustomed waves of melancholy static? But—

A little hell, raised now and then.

May waken up our slumb'ring statesmen.

* * * * *

IT shall be the aim of the writer to point out some methods by which a brighter outlook for the West may be greatly facilitated by Eastern Canada, through a more intimate understanding of Western problems, a broader conception of Western possibilities and merging our national economic relationships into an industrial and political harmony that will spell out these pleasing synonyms, "Progress" and "Prosperity," into a magical, visible actuality for the benefit of the Dominion of Canada as a whole. It shall be the aim also to deal correctively with some of the mistakes and prejudices of the West. There are mutual duties and responsibilities which must not be ignored.

* * * * *

And right here let us go into committee-of-the-whole, for it is absolutely imperative that we allow one mighty atom of truth to thoroughly percolate our mental process. It is this:

There can be no conclusion, no solution to any controversy, any problem, until both sides come together with minds open to admit the white light of Truth and her pure-robed attendants of Tolerance, Faith and Goodwill.

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All the cards must be spread upon the table, and there must be an unprejudiced determination that Justice shall carry the day.

Mental reservations will wreck any conference.

Snap on the current of candor.

* * * * *

GOING back, for a moment, to the "hell-raising" episodes before the Ottawa Agricultural committee, those who digested Hansard's reports of the "blue ruin" evidence there uttered were probably at a loss to decide whether the country's most pressing need was a minister of immigration or an official auctioneer; or whether the problem of our "boundless prairies" could not be most expeditiously solved by simply handing the country back to the Indians—provided, of course, the noble Red Men would accept the gift. A few of the speeches sounded like the last sad rites over what was once enthusiastically termed "Our grand and glorious heritage of limitless possibilities." Consolation and hope came only from the knowledge that, while there is a sprinkling of qualified clergymen, no professional undertakers are included amongst the so-called "motley crew" from West of the Great Lakes.

Of a truth, however, the quantity and assortment of cosmic dust that was stirred up in our corridors of legislative inspiration and architectural magnificence has given the country food for very serious thought. No one can deny that. The phantasmagoria of the whole involved situation is reflected everywhere about us and the end is not yet.

One has but to pick up any Canadian newspaper or magazine to find a gorgeous largesse of "local color" on the Dominion-wide problems, Provincial controversies, sectional demands and class disturbances that are erecting an effective barrier to that national harmony which makes for uninterrupted growth and development—that aggressive, united industrial activity which makes for a realization of the pots of plenty that are our indisputable birthright.

But let us not take this thing of the pessimism uttered at Ottawa and broadcasted by the four winds of the press too seriously. Even though the Western members may have "raised hell" at Ottawa, as the eastern politician stated, there is purification in fire and brimstone!

Nothing else that has transpired in the realm of politics in recent years has done half so much to bring the real economic needs of Western Agriculture to the forefront as has the "calamity howling" at the 1923 session of the Federal Parliament.

The thing which now remains to be done is to meet our misunderstandings, problems and controversies face to face. Let them be held aloft in the sunlight of frankness and faith to be dissolved in the radiance of a genuine Canadianism.

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WHERE RESPONSIBILITY LIES

WE have hinted that the newspaper reception which greeted the Western Members' little bombing practice in the House, was mostly one of severe condemnation, both East and West. But whatever the press reception, it is safe to say that in almost every instance it was prompted by the political policy of each individual periodical—merely a typical demonstration of the partisan tactics for either defensive or offensive purposes with which we are all familiar.

Naturally, there would be little or no thought as to intelligent analysis for definite, constructive results.

By the same token, it was likewise typical of the genus politician that the "unsophisticated" Progressives never once intimated that either they or the farmers who voted them to their jobs at Ottawa were just as much responsible as anyone else for the deplorable conditions in the agricultural West which they described in such vivid phraseology and with such pathetic abandon.

It is important, nay, vital, that this thought also should be carefully preserved for frequent future reference. It should occupy a definite, easily accessible niche in each mind.

For why? Because nothing is more human, nothing more elemental than the propensity for shifting blame to the shoulders of some one else.

Men's middle name is Alibi. It is an inheritance from the Garden of Eden.

Adam, when taken to task by the Lord in connection with the famous episode of the apple, declared, "It was the Woman who tempted me!"

Hence, we find that the Ancient Order of the Alibi is contemporaneous with all human history. It would be a daring debater indeed who would attempt to deny that the gentle, yet insidious, game of "passing the buck" has not been perpetrated as a popular pastime all down through the ages to our present day and generation. In consequence of the custom, therefore, it is small wonder that straight reasoning is so frequently started off on false tangents and the trail to truth and responsibility diverted by confusion.

There is no need to delve into ancient history or to ramble all over the universe for evidence as to how Old Man Alibi gets in his subtle work. We have him with us to-day in Canada in all his pristine glory. He is the commander-in-chief of this uproarious controversy that is raging around the "problems" affecting the agricultural industry of the West. He has set us about each other's ears until nearly all the mental exercise we exhibit in the situation is jumping indiscriminately at accusative conclusions.

The West blames the East; the East blames the West; this interest declares that interest to be the malefactor. In short, everybody is blaming everybody else, while the politicians are so busy

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making capital from the blunders of the day they have no time to be concerned about the pitfalls of disaster which dot the economic highway.

As a matter of hard fact, however, we're all to blame—every manjack of us. We're simply trying to dodge our responsibilities by running away from our duty.

What these responsibilities and duties are, in the dispassionate opinion of the writer, will develop as we proceed. For the moment there are a few fundamentals we have got to recognize, else intelligent application of sound reasoning is impossible. There's a great, big job to be tackled for the common good of Canada, and it is the sole purpose of this humble effort to attempt to direct thought along some practical avenues that are capable of leading to an ultimate, amicable solution, providing there are a sufficient number of CANADIANS willing to buckle into the thing honestly and sincerely.

But know this: We might as well try to dip the ocean or weigh the moon as to attempt practical solution of the problems that confront us unless we proceed with minds absolutely dissociated from petty, abortive prejudices of politics, social position, geography or commercial associations, and with sordid, self-centred ambitions cast into the discard.

At the outset we must realize that whatever difficulties we are facing have not been brought about because we, as a national unit or as industrial combinations or as individuals, have been too wise, too unselfish, too patriotic, too studious, too ethical. If that is so—and it is so!—then our best cue is to start off right by doing a tremendous lot of heart-searching, no matter in what part of the country we live, or where our commercial interests lie.

* * * * *

IT has already been intimated that despite the startling alacrity with which all and sundry are prepared to fix the blame, only a very limited number of people divine what is really wrong. But there is one thing, naturally, of which parliament and press, pulpit and platform, plutocrats and proletariat are fully cognizant. They are fully agreed that there is some fundamental flaw in the fabric of our national development; that some destructive influence is slowly yet surely lowering the glory-high standard of cohesive patriotic sentiment that was once our boast and pride; that some unidentified monster is reaching out relentless talons, seeking to dismember the unification of those Canadian ideals and interests so painstakingly woven together for us by the Fathers of Confederation in their labor of love for their Country and devotion to the Empire. Unidentified? Yes; because there is no unanimity as to the Real Cause of our troubles, no definite branding of the menace. And it is the unseen, the unnamed that is the terror to be most dreaded.

Sometimes it is the obvious that is most consistently overlooked in its fundamental relationship to an acknowledged condition. While

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there are naturally many contributing agencies to Canada's ills as a self-governing country, there must be one primary reason why the machinery of government and industry is cluttered up with monkey-wrenches.

And here it is:

We insist upon considering our national problems as political problems, instead of recognizing them as Economic problems in whose solution the People can accomplish more than the Politicians.

Like the homesteader's beans, which must soak overnight, we'll just leave that statement for the present and give it a chance to sink in.

Is Western Canada worth while?

If it is, then it is worth while going to the greatest possible lengths for speedily bringing its economic requirements orderly into line with its ultimate destiny as the future wealth and population producer of the Dominion.

There has been a lot of blue-ruin talk about Western Canada—"Hansard" was full of it during last session, and the press was full of it. A counteractive campaign was waged against it. Both sides are still talking. There's a glut of conversational extravagance, but a lamentable void of constructive, results-getting activity. Time is passing; our problems are real.

Let us lay a foundation of national co-operative economy, and erect thereon a structure of concerted Commonsense.

Let us grub out the brambles of contentious error root and branch. Sugar gathered from the sand-pit will not sweeten our porridge, nor will barbed controversy give us industrial prosperity. The individual Canadian, private or public, cannot escape his personal responsibilities by shifting them to the shoulders of some one else, or by refusing to recognize them at all. It's got to be a case of frankly facing facts and standing four-square together in whatever it is needful to do. Battles are not won by mutiny in the ranks, nor are they won by the desertion of leaders.

BURSTING THE IMMIGRATION BUBBLE

IN order to arrive at lucid, logical conclusions, it is necessary to touch, however briefly, upon a number of the outstanding points which go to make up the general economic problems of Western Canada. But, since all are interwoven in more or less complex manner, there can be no prescribed method of dealing with them in orderly sequence. Nor would the reader's grasp be assisted by any such attempt.

For instance, it was the two-million dollar vote for 1923 immigration around which revolved the avalanche of "blue ruin" in the House of Commons by the Progressive members from West of the Great Lakes. No one suggested that immigration in itself was a menace

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to the country; rather, the conclusion to be drawn from the candid expressions on conditions at large was *that Western Canada, in its present economic state, was a menace to the immigrants who would settle on our prairie farmsteads.* The immigration vote simply supplied the vehicle for articulating in parliament the hundred and one dire grievances the Western Farmer has been storing up over a period of years. It was on account of these grievances, both real and fancied, that the Western Farmer voted solidly for Progressive or farmer candidates in the general federal election of 1921.

In the meantime it has got to be admitted that there was reason for dismal forebodings over what was termed, with charming charitableness, "the government's immigration policy." Considering it purely as a "policy" there is no complaint to utter; but so far as bringing in settlers for the farm lands of Western Canada is concerned the government had as much need for elaborate expenditures during 1923 as an Eskimo has for silk pajamas.

Why? Because thousands of farmers—the product of previous immigration policies—have abandoned their farms. The total number literally starved out during the past three years would be quite staggering if stated in actual numbers. These figures are omitted by special request. Is it not good business and good logic to suggest that the reasons for so many of the rural population of the prairies quitting the country be removed before we spend millions on new settlers who, in turn, will also become discouraged and dissatisfied, because they, too, will find the same impossible conditions which confronted their predecessors?

Let us get this thing right! Everybody, of course, recognizes there is something wrong with our national development. Population growth is practically at a standstill. What to do? "We must people the West!" goes forth the unanimous cry from the East, and also from many of the urban centres of the West. All eyes are then turned towards the government—the government must take action and get results. Consequently, to appease the popular demand the government labors long and painfully and brings forth its "policy."

Not a dollar of the public money should have been voted this year of 1923 for agricultural immigration. "A rather tall remark," you say. But it's true—so palpably true that it will be difficult to convince a lot of people; or rather, to convince the politics of a lot of people. But let it be said that unless a few hundred thousand Canadian citizens reconstruct their ideas with reference to Western Canada oceans of water will flow under the township bridge before we discover what's wrong with our national progress and proceed understandingly to apply the remedy.

If the millions voted the past few years upon immigration policies had been spent instead upon the completion of branch lines of railway left at dead ends, and the construction of new branch lines in productive territory, Western Canada would have retained many thousands of settlers who have abandoned

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their homesteads, and in addition could have taken care of many thousands of new settlers.

Canadian periodicals from coast to coast devoted columns and pages and reams of space to the inaugural trip of Sir Henry Thornton over the government railway lines in Western Canada. There were banquets and speeches and decorations and cheers galore. All fine and dandy! But do you know the one incident of Sir Henry's whole triumphant trip that stands out pre-eminently as having by far and away the most economic significance? The chances are you do not, for it was practically overlooked by the publicity experts. Listen! It was when a delegation of four settlers from southern Saskatchewan, clad in homely garb, and with the strain of toil and worry upon their countenances, sought out the Canadian National Railway's President at Moose Jaw and related to him the story of having to haul their grain forty miles and more to the nearest elevator. They explained that their circumstances were such that they were compelled to market their grain as soon as it was threshed; they could not hold for possible better prices. But that was not the worst—

Sometimes, after travelling all night that forty or fifty miles, they found the elevator blocked, and they had to either dump their grain upon the ground or haul it back home, forty or fifty miles, and no money to buy food and clothing for the family!

You imagine that instance an unusual situation, a rare condition? Then all you need is enlightenment as to facts about Western Canada. Your attention is directed to the scores of similar conditions in Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba.

Many thousands of settlers are too far from transportation to make a living from their agricultural labors, to say nothing of the killing strain.

True, there are scores of districts where these hardships are not encountered; where comparative comfort and contentment abound.

But bear in mind that it is to the isolated regions that we expect our new immigrants to settle, and stick!

Do we honestly imagine immigrants worthy of our future Canadian citizenship to be so simple and childlike that they will enthusiastically take up the burden where virile settlers have failed after years of fruitless, yet faithful, effort?

Let us face this situation sincerely, frankly, intelligently. If it is criticism of governmental policy, it is constructive criticism. In Canada the party in power goes on the assumption that the government can do no wrong. And, in inverse ratio, the party that wants to be in power consistently maintains that the government can do no right. It's a wrong attitude where the very life of the nation is at stake. It is an attitude that largely supplies the answer to the question being asked from coast to coast: "Why has Canada less

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than nine millions of population?" The only sane thing to do is for all parties to get together, like a business corporation out for results, on this matter of our national growth and development.

We have touched upon only one phase of the immigration question; but it is the most important phase for immediate action. Aside from the material aspects it embraces a psychology that penetrates to the very soul of the men and the women settlers to whom we look for solving the riddles of population and production. It is not economic theory; it is bald, hard fact - hard as the concrete foundations of the mental hospitals where so many men and women settlers have been driven by their hopeless worries, or as the stones erected over suicide graves.

Plain talk? Yes; the time has come for just that.

CANADA, THE GATEWAY TO UNITED STATES

BUT be sure of this: Every cloud in Western Canada has its silver lining. No insurmountable difficulties confront the country. It is a land of paradoxes. It is the birthplace of optimism, and when waves of pessimism are wafted out on the eastbound zephyrs make certain that it is not mere whims and fancies that are sitting in the seat of judgment.

Every day or two one reads in the press colorful stories about increases of immigration, and even about the host of Canadians who are returning to their native land from the United States. That's political propaganda pure and simple. Let no one be lulled into a sense of false confidence, false optimism, false security by such political humbug. That is the sort of misinformation that is keeping Canada's growth at a standstill. The public is inclined to accept as gospel all such encouraging, satisfying rumors.

What, in Heaven's name, is the use of immigration unless we can keep it in the country? We take immigrants through the front door into Canada and they speedily leave by the back door to enter the United States!

Not only that, but tens of thousands of seasoned immigrants whom we considered as permanent Canadian settlers have left the prairies the past two years for the United States because they refused to stand any longer the privations they suffered for many years because of broken pledges respecting transportation and because of a short-sighted, complacent attitude on the part of leaders East and West who consistently refuse to stir a hand to solve the real, vital economic situation that exists.

It is high time the people at large were aware of the facts.

Want some official figures? Here they are:

From June 30, 1901, to March, 1921, Canada received from all sources 3,577,311 immigrants. The official census return for those

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two decades shows that the population of Canada increased by 3,417,026—or 160,285 less than the immigration for the same period.

And the situation has not improved one iota since 1921 rather, it is the reverse that is the case. During 1921 and 1922 Western Canada lost a whole army of the very finest settlers that any land could have to the United States.

* * * * *

THERE'S a lot more could be said about the immigration "policy" of the government, apart from Ottawa putting the cart before the horse as is being done at present. The whole thing should be on a more business-like footing—more results-getting economy—more patriotism and less pap. *When the time is ripe ten times the results could be obtained at half the cost*, if the ancient methods in vogue were scientifically, systematically revolutionized. In this booklet it is impossible to go into exhaustive detail. One urgent need might be noted, however, in the advisability of having the vacant land in each rural municipality definitely charted, as to location, physical features, etc., so that communities of immigrants could be placed in suitable localities, instead of having them isolated as so often is the case, each one making shift to find a farm for himself. The old helter-skelter homesteading days are over for the most part, and the wholly unscientific methods employed during the great Siftonian rush will never answer the needs of now. Perhaps, too, if the motion picture magnates were tactfully approached they might deign to exhibit a few pictures of this great Dominion where summer and autumn pastoral scenes take the place of the unending series of films depicting ice and snow and dog-teams as our chief natural resource.

We have said "when the time is ripe ten times the results could be obtained at half the cost." The time WILL be ripe only when there is forthcoming the intensive application of intelligent energy to overcome the numerous handicaps under which the agriculture industry is suffering at the present time—handicaps that are simply the result of pure neglect on the part of those within whose power it lies to remove them. If the people at large can be stirred into a frame of mind and outlook where they will concern themselves with the progress of the country, it will not be long before those in authority will be compelled to substitute Action for excuses and subterfuges. What a pity to see the fairest and most promising land in the whole world remaining dormant and dwindling for lack of a little intelligent human initiative!

Does some one ask for proof?

Look up the population statistics of Canada. Get the official figures on the exodus of original settlers and discouraged newcomers from the prairie provinces. Ask some leading financial house about the withdrawal of capital from Western agricultural enterprise. Ask also about the increasing number of defunct or nearly defunct urban municipalities of the West. There are, it is safe to say, not more than a score of cities and towns in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta

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today where debenture flotations would be considered by the bond dealers as a safe and sound investment.

It is folly to keep these facts dark any longer. There will never be any concerted attempt to put things on the proper economic basis until the people at large are made aware of the bald truth and insist upon the remedies being applied that lie easily to hand.

Intrinsically and potentially there is nothing the matter with Western Canada. It is suffering simply from the dry-rot of Eastern misunderstanding, Eastern self-sufficiency and Eastern political manipulation, plus Western political manipulation, and the discouragement of Western settlers over long-standing problems which have been permitted to take root.

* * * *

IS the West Worth While? Is there going to be any reasonable, brainy effort put forth to make it worth while? Ask the federal member for your constituency! Ask yourself as a thinking, patriotic Canadian! The people can do more than the politicians if they will only make enough noise; if they will only develop the patriotic urge that FEELS Canadas OUR country.

Recently, an Eastern business man was told of the number of Saskatchewan's rural population that has "deserted" during 1921 and 1922. "I can hardly credit that" he said "because Saskatchewan led the Dominion in 1921 by supplying 6,560 out of a grand total of 18,873 farmers who paid income tax."

There's a point worth noting. When the fall crop returns are in and it is shown that the prairie provinces have produced several hundred million bushels of grain, worth several hundred million dollars, the people of the East, and the majority of the urban dwellers of the West, smile blandly and remark upon the "prosperity of the prairies." They never enquire as to the thousands of Western grain growers, who, through one handicap or another, have not realized enough to pay interest on their debts. The inclination always is to look upon the rosy side—to pick out the fortunately situated farmers who perhaps made money, and forget all about the fellows who lost. But that sort of cheery reasoning does not help the development of the country any. It does not increase our population or reduce the war debt. It does not solve pressing problems. It does not revive the disillusioned.

With a national debt of over two and a half billions, exclusive of the municipalities, Canada owes approximately \$300.00 for every man, woman and child in the country.

And yet, with enough latent wealth to pay off this sum twice over in ten years, the vast majority of our citizenship is sitting down, twiddling its thumbs and talking politics—the while not a few impatient, disgusted Westerners are endeavoring to stir up a secession or annexation movement.

Out of 200,000,000 acres fit to farm in the prairie only 36,000,000 acres were under cultivation in 1922.

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TRANSPORTATION IS FOREMOST PROBLEM

IT would almost seem that the time has arrived for showing a little speed. The foremost physical need of Western Canada is adequate branch line transportation facilities. Here is something real, concrete, positive; yet we find our government prepared to spend millions upon immigration before dealing vigorously, adequately and positively with the problem that is directly responsible for many thousands of our Western settlers leaving the country in despair over unhonored promises of branch line railway facilities.

Again, we find there is apparently a majority of the political parties (for purely political reasons) prepared to commit the country to the expenditure of more millions upon that more or less chimerical enterprise known as "The Hudson Bay Route." If the same amount of co-operative energy were expended upon immediately practical and necessary projects as is being expended upon Hudson Bay propaganda we would be getting somewhere with Canadian progress and we could visualize prosperity without a periscope.

Nobody is leaving the country because the Hudson Bay route is not completed and nobody is leaving the country because a quarter of a million new immigrants did not settle in the West last year; but thousands and more thousands HAVE left the country because of the lack of adequate branch line facilities. Yet we hope by spending money on a huge scale to obtain permanent settlers to take their place, although they will be subject to the same hardships that are causing the past and present exodus.

Take off the shock absorbers and get the full benefit of that jolt.

But there need be no fears entertained on the score of immigration if the country is made economically attractive for immigrants.

Do those essential things that will assist in making agricultural production in Western Canada profitable and settlers will swarm to the prairies like bees around the honeysuckle.

As intimated above, the hope for transportation rates being lowered for Western wheat, from a tidewater outlet at Hudson Bay is perhaps one of the most fallacious ideas yet advanced for economic improvement. The admittedly short open season at the Bay, the tremendous cost of establishing harbor facilities, the gigantic outlay for storage elevators, rolling stock, etc., puts the Bay route out of the question, at least for years to come. It is very doubtful if this route will ever be feasible for the export of wheat, other than perhaps for a comparatively small section of the northern country.

The question of cheaper transportation will be solved just about the time the farmers of Western Canada can unite long enough to solidly articulate their demands apart from political grounds, and have

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the consistent backing of the East for their claims. For instance, there is the question of the deepening of the St. Lawrence waterways in order to bring ocean bottoms to the head of the Great Lakes and save the farmer from seven to ten cents per bushel on his wheat. Why is the Hudson Bay route advocated so strongly, and practically nothing heard in the West with reference to the positively feasible and nationally economical project of the deep waterways? The answer is that the Bay route is a matter of politics, while the tidewater outlet at the Lakes is "merely" an economic practicality.

Some concessions in freight rates for prairie grain via Vancouver have been granted. Greater reductions are imperatively justified. Here again it is up to the prairie farmer to make a move that will give him a substantial saving through the Western wheat route. At any rate there are additional shippers every season now via the port of Vancouver, and this route has proved feasible and profitable.

With satisfactory wheat routes established East and West, there will be no need for the Hudson Bay to continue to advance its claims on the score of economy. It will never, even if half that is said in its favor is true, become the logical economical route for Western grain.

As to the railway to the Bay for internal development purposes, that is an entirely different matter; but it is a matter that can easily stand until the trend of settlement makes more positive advances in a northerly direction. There are plenty of agricultural and mineral resources in close proximity to existing railways that have not as yet been touched. The politicians and others who own pulp limits and mineral rights in the North should be made to await the larger and more important national prosperity.

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WHILE recriminations are useless at this juncture, in connection with the action of the Senate of Canada in killing the Canadian National Railways' branch line program for 1923, it will be quite pertinent to ask whether the enormity of that action is realized in Eastern Canada in its true significance as affecting the general growth and development of the country. That the government was primarily at fault in the method of presenting its bill does not help the situation.

As a matter of general information we set forth in detail the work in hand in the three prairie provinces which has now been blocked:

St. Rose du Lac branch to Rorketown, Man., 22 miles already graded; 22 miles, including existing grading, \$387,000.

Pine Falls Branch, Man., to Winnipeg River, 19 miles, \$450,000.

Peebles, southerly branch to Mile 22, Saskatchewan, 20 miles already graded; 22 miles including existing grading, \$300,000.

Thunderhill branch northeasterly to Prince Albert branch, four miles already graded, 69 miles, \$1,656,000.

Melfort branch, northeasterly to Nipawan, Sask., six miles already graded, 17 miles, \$360,000.

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From Prince Albert branch northeasterly to near Paddockwood, Sask., 18 miles already graded, 23 miles, \$406,000.

Bengough branch, southwesterly past Fifelake, Sask., 48 miles, \$1,404,500.

Gravelbourg branch westerly to Neidpath, Sask., 11 miles already graded, 11 miles, \$174,000.

Easton branch southeasterly towards Whitebear, Sask., 35 miles already graded, 35 miles, \$649,000.

Turtleford branch southeasterly to near Hafford, Sask., 23 miles already graded, 102 miles, \$2,313,000.

Jackfish branch westerly to Glenbogie, Sask., 5 miles already graded, 5 miles, \$181,000.

Vonda branch northeasterly to near Wakaw, Sask., 23 miles already graded, 31 miles, \$581,000.

Dunblane branch to Mawer, Sask., nothing graded, 42 miles, \$2,767,000.

Willowbrook branch westerly to Mile Six west of Willowbrook Sask., 4 miles already graded, 6 miles, \$154,000.

Acadian valley branch westerly to Mile 43, Sask. and Alta., 42 miles already graded, 42 miles, \$768,000.

Alliance branch to a point between Sibbald and Alsask, Alta., nothing graded, 70 miles, \$1,034,000.

Hanna branch to Warden, Alta., nothing graded, 57 miles, \$1,455,000.

Loverna branch, westerly to connect with Hanna-Warden branch Alta., 50 miles, \$1,362,000.

St. Paul branch easterly to 21st mile beyond St. Paul, Alta., nothing graded, 21 miles, \$525,000.

Joint section with C.P.R. between Rosedale and Bull Pound Creek, Alta., half cost, 39 miles, \$915,000.

In addition there were branch line expenditures authorized in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec and British Columbia.

Despite anything that might be said here, the majority of the electors of our "free and independent" commonwealth will construe the action of the Senate exactly in accordance with each individual's party affiliations.

BUTCHERING OF BRANCH LINES COSTLY

BUT suppose we glance at the economic side of the picture, forgetting for the moment the non-productive political side?

How many Canadians, East and West, are interested to learn that the butchering of the branch lines bill has still further depleted the agricultural population of the West?

How many Canadians are interested to learn that thousands and

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thousands of acres are being left unbroken, with plows stopped in mid-furrow in many instances, because the flashing of the news of the Senate's action turned enthusiastic encouragement into the old black despair in many of those sections of the West upon which we must depend for new development and increased population?

How many Canadians realize that the constant repetition of repudiated promises with regard to branch line construction is producing a psychological effect upon the mind of the Western settler that is working economic havoc for the whole of Canada?

This effect is not only visible upon the settler already here, who has been struggling for years under a handicap that has reached the limit of human endurance, but it is asserting itself already upon many of the fresh immigrants the government boasts of having secured this year.

What folly to spend millions upon new immigration only to force the newcomers out again to "black-eye" the country!

No wonder Canada's population growth is practically at a stand-still! No wonder there is unemployment in the cities while the farms are undermanned! No wonder the United States is attracting ever-increasing thousands of our most useful citizens!

In actual cash the business of the country has lost vastly more millions this year than the total cost of the Canadian National's three year building program would amount to, through the administration of the political axe.

Settlers, old and new, have been scared out, at a potential loss it is impossible to calculate. Proposed new cultivation has ceased; work on new elevators, etc., has been abandoned. Merchants have cancelled big new orders for goods of all kinds. Confidence is being shattered that will take many years of sane constructive enterprise to re-establish.

These are things in which Eastern Canada must be interested equally with the West. If the West goes back or remains stagnant the East suffers; but if the West develops, the East prospers.

And let it always be remembered that it is to Western Canada the country must look, if the public-owned railways are to be made self-sustaining, instead of creating big annual deficits.

The defeat of the branch lines bill is no more a set-back to the Western provinces than it is to the Eastern provinces. It is a distinct set-back to the nation at large.

The question now arises: Is the same retrogressive procedure to transpire at the next session of parliament at Ottawa? Will the Canadian Government again assist the Canadian Senate to become a convenient slaughter-house of Western development and consequently of national growth and prosperity?

Not if the people and press say "No!"

Since the problems of immigration and marketing are most vitally

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affected by extent and cost of transportation, this matter of branch lines for the West stands out pre-eminently as an economic factor in the building up of the Greater Canada that is the heritage we all hope to hand down to our children.

The West realizes this to the full, and it devolves upon the East to realize it with equal vision and understanding.

Away with the selfish, senseless, political intrigue that is sapping life from the roots of our Canadian nationhood. Our destiny is in our own hands. There's nothing difficult or involved about the wonderful achievements possible if we will but think in terms of progressive patriotism instead of terms of purile partyism.

At the forthcoming session of the Federal Parliament the branch lines bill should be the first piece of business introduced. Hansard disclosed that at the last session days and weeks were consumed in an endless chain of inconsequential chatter, and while the political magpies were thus wasting time and the taxpayers' money, a nice little scheme was being hatched for butchering the most vital piece of economic business that was before the House. The Senate is getting nearly all the blame for this crime against the West, but if the Government had presented a money bill for the work, the Senate would have had no say in the matter.

Is the West worth while?

Every man who has a stake in the country of any kind, be he day laborer or millionaire manufacturer should take an actively intelligent interest in the prosecution of the demand for branch lines in the West. Herein lies one of the fundamentals of national progress. We can shout "Immigration" until we are black in the face and spend millions of money to back up the shouting; but unless we give prospective immigrants to the unsettled areas of the West a reasonable opportunity to get their products to market all our shouting and all our cash will be in vain.

* * * * *

IT may interest many to learn that while the population of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta is only 22 per cent. of the Dominion's total yet these three provinces possess in estimated gross agricultural wealth (1922) 52 per cent. of the land, 25 per cent. of the buildings, 53 per cent. of the implements, 40 per cent. of the live stock, 32½ per cent. of the poultry and 40 per cent. of the agricultural production of the whole country. Over 26 million acres are now available for entry, and there are tens of millions acres more privately held within a few miles of existing railways much of which can be purchased on advantageous terms.

Is the West Worth While?

How much longer is Canada to be a nation in name only—a feeder for the United States which is slowly yet surely draining us to a dangerous degree of both men and resource?

IS THE WEST WORTH WHILE? UNDENIABLE FOLLY OF CLASS POLITICS

In connection with our vital national economics the time has come when the crooked and devious paths of partisan politics must no longer be permitted to divert sane reasoning and aggressive action from the straight highway of truth and progress.

Every thoughtful farmer of Western Canada will readily agree that the foremost agricultural needs are more branch line transportation facilities, cheaper freights, cheaper operating expenses and cheaper supplies. In short, there should be more profit in his business if he is going to succeed, and there must be increased development if Canada is to grow and prosper. These things are all understood in a more or less vague way. False leaders, whether actuated by calculating design or pure ignorance, persuaded the farmer that his redress lay through political channels and the Progressive party was born. But if the farmers of the West continue to rely upon the Progressive party, or any other political organization, to solve their economic ills, the difficulties and confusion which now exist will be as an ant-hill compared to the mountain of trouble that is in store, even admitting that their initial entry into the class politics arena has served a useful purpose in its disillusionments.

If the farmers sow wheat, they will reap wheat; if they sow party politics they are going to reap the inevitable intrigue, dissention and bitterness that are the whelps of party politics. The men they send to Ottawa should be men who are worthy, able and honest, irrespective of parties.

The fundamental problems confronting the farmer can no more be solved by legislation than the seasons can be regulated through the same means. The farmer's problems have got to be tackled at the source. The farmer has got to work co-operatively with his neighbor farmers, as thousands are now beginning to realize.

Co-operation is the crying need—co-operation in the production, distribution and marketing of the products the farmer produces upon his farm. These are the fundamental requirements. Can they be realized from legislation without personal work and initiative and organization? The farmer who thinks they can is merely gold-bricking himself—he is his own worst enemy.

The sooner the farmer gets rid of the legislation and political bug as the cure-all for his ills the better it will be for Mr. Farmer.

It is wrong in principle; it is disillusioning in practice; it is disastrous in its psychological effects.

Here is a case in point. In the summer of 1922 the grasshoppers were rather bad in a number of sections of Saskatchewan and Alberta. Shortly after ten o'clock one morning a farmer, steeped in political theory and owing a large sum of money to one of the banks, stepped disconsolately into the private office of the bank manager. "Well,"

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he said, "I guess it's all up. The 'hoppers have started in on my place and they're going to eat me out of everything."

This man had 340 acres in a good stand of wheat and had some rye and oat crop as well. The bank manager, who fortunately possessed a lot of horse sense along with a forceful character, asked the farmer: "When did they strike you? how much crop is gone?"

"Well, they got busy on my place last night and they've already eaten up a patch a hundred yards square."

"What about poison? How much have you set out?"

"Haven't got a mite of poison" returned the farmer, "I figured the government was going to stop these 'hoppers."

"Government, Hell!" ejaculated the irate banker. "Now you listen to me. I happen to know there's a mixing station within ten miles of your farm. You get out of here immediately and drive to the station and get some poison. I'll telephone out that you're coming. I want you back at your farm within two hours, and by that time I'll have some men there ready to help you spread it. Step lively now; you got your loan here on good faith, and, by gad, it's up to you personally to make that faith good without croaking about the government."

Sensing the fact that objection would get him nowhere, the farmer hustled along and got the poison. The upshot was that the hoppers were stopped by sundown, and the man in question realized that fall the best returns from his crop that he had had in six years.

The occurrence is quoted because it is a true incident and because it is a true reflection of what is going on in the back of the heads of a whole lot of farmers in connection with their sally into class politics. This said sally has done good only in that it has proved to thousands of intelligent Western farmers that their political cake is economic dough.

FARMERS CAN DO MUCH TO PROTECT THEIR OWN INTERESTS

NO one realizes better than the writer that the farmer's interests have got to be protected where essential legislation enters in. But who will argue that the farmer, soundly organized economically through the most beneficial co-operative system, is not in a vastly better position to have his just demands met than where he is merely waging a party warfare in the political arena. As a matter of fact, his vote will talk with more force and effect, and with more unity withal, in his purely industrial capacity than it will in his political capacity.

* * * * *

Denmark, the most advanced agricultural nation in the world, supplies striking evidence in support of this truth.

The farmers of Denmark have established an effective system of

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production and marketing their crops. They are getting good prices and have eliminated the middleman.

Writing in May 1923, John Clayton, a special correspondent of the Chicago Tribune says,—“Co-operation to the nth power, that does away with the middleman and small exporters and importers, has been achieved by the Danish farmer. A movement entirely outside politics, its years of patient effort have been rewarded by one of the most efficient producing and marketing organizations in Europe, and Danish farmers to-day are getting a better proportionate price for their products than those of any other European country, based either on actual gold value or relation to wages. The secret of the organization's success is that it has tackled the problem of cash returns at its base. Instead of crying for subsidies, for state aid, for long term credits, instead of lobbying for favorable legislation, it has sought by plain business methods to cut down the cost of marketing goods, both in the cities and abroad, and it has succeeded to an unusual extent.

“The farmer of Denmark” continues Mr. Clayton, “is prosperous today when trade is stagnant and factories idle. He has steered clear of these political shoals on which the hopes of so many like enterprizes have been wrecked. The Danish farmer belongs to what political party he likes, votes as he pleases and ‘saws wood.’ His one disastrous splurge into politics as a ‘farm bloc’ was an attempt to do away with protective tariff two years ago at a time when Danish industries needed all the protection they could get. He failed, and learned his lesson.”

Denmark is a country of three and a quarter million population and as for its size it could be tucked away in one corner of any of the Western Canada Provinces and scarcely noticed. But the Danish farmer is economically wise. He gets all the profits from his products because he has charge of his own marketing. When money is tight he should worry, for he is paid cash for his products at an average market price and then receives a surplus if they bring more when sold.

In Western Canada the farmer, apparently, is not content with handing the major portion of his profits over to parasites in the guise of market traders, but he is now prepared to exchange his rare inheritance for a mess of politics.

Sounds like more blue ruin talk, doesn't it? But a disease must be thoroughly and frankly diagnosed before an efficient treatment can be prescribed that might reasonably ensure a cure. A truly serious problem confronts the whole nation in connection with the Western Canada situation, and it is small wonder, in face of the general apparent unwillingness of the country at large to bravely meet the issues and deal with them drastically, that so many thousands are today asking the question: “Is the West Worth While?”

But it is primarily up to the farmers themselves to set their marketing grievances right. Least of all is it a political problem. Let that fact be understood and let us move accordingly; otherwise there can be no progress, no solution. If our farmers are determined

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to continue organizing with feverish intensity for political action, and letting slide organization for economic efficiency, then we must continue to mark time, and perhaps slide back a little instead of advancing toward the goal of the golden fleece.

If misfortune is dogging the footsteps of the farmer of Western Canada it is simply because he has not the nerve or the 'savvy' to turn around and chase the dog.

The writer is not inclined to be too critical of the individual farmer, although his continued somnolence is greatly to be deplored. He has been led into a position and condition because he was too trustful of supposedly smart and faithful leaders, whose selfish ends and senseless "solutions" he has not taken the pains to fathom.

Political action finds its most ardent supporters among those who have political ambitions. This was clearly discernible at the federal nominations in the West in 1921, when at many of the Progressive conventions there were from ten to fifteen candidates seeking the constituency honors.

But these glad-to-serve gentry are not the worst. There is that insidious rascal of inscrutable purpose who is a king-pin leader, but who drops out of the arena as soon as his fell design is complete. He is the individual who senses that the growing knowledge among the farmers that something is wrong is liable to lead to the undoing of the leeches who are sucking the viens of the agricultural industry white. He is afraid the farmer will come to realize that co-operation is as yet an unknown word, practically, in Western Canada; so he exerts all his power in leading along the false trail of politics. When he gets the fight nicely going he retires gracefully back to his game of graft; he continues, with scores of his henchmen and peers, to mount up his fortune from profits which rightfully, logically belong to the farmer. This is the stripe of "leader" the farmer and the country has most to fear. He is like the Apache guide of Paris, who leads the unwary tourist into a secluded street and then leaves him to be murdered and robbed by the gang. How long, O Lord, before the farmer gets wise?

WHERE THE SILVER LINING SHOWS

BUT all is not gloom. The Farmers of the West are not all blind. Where the silver lining shows is in the fact that there are a number of farmers—perhaps comparatively small at present, but constantly increasing—who are awakened to a realization of the true state of affairs, and have a pretty clear vision of the real solution to the pressing problems that encumber. Let us glance for a moment at one or two instances where farmers have by intelligent, energetic, co-operative methods faced mountains of difficulties and levelled them down, to the smoothness of the prairies upon which they live and toil.

In the fall of 1922 the farmers in one district of Southwest Saskatchewan decided they could no longer put up with excessive charges

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imposed for threshing. Within a few days they organized the whole countryside upon a co-operative basis. Result: They cut down their threshing bills more than one half.

"A small item," you say. Yes, a comparatively small item; but for those farmers in that particular season it meant the difference between a loss and a profit on their operations. And don't forget that the sum total of the farmer's troubles is made up of a number of small things and a number of larger things, but all vitally important. The point is that they faced the issue, stuck together and overcame the trouble.

And ALL agricultural troubles of the West can be solved by the farmer taking the bull by the horns in the name of economic action.

The farmers in the district referred to might have — as has been done time and again—sent deputations to the provincial government asking investigations of excessive threshing charges. They might have written letters to the press demanding a royal commission or something. Or, they might have done, as many in other districts did do, wailed and wept upon one another's shoulders and held indignation meetings of the Grain Growers' locals. But they did none of these things. They simply WENT TO WORK with sleeves uprolled and minds determined, and their threshing problem was solved—just like that!—That sort of action has a more profitable effect than a hundred pages of "Hansard."

Last year when grasshoppers were bad, effective work with poison brigades saved the farmers millions of dollars, and the farmers learned a valuable lesson in the benefits of co-operation. In the same district referred to above, however, the long distance from transportation facilities made it impossible to get in sufficient poison. The danger was realized early in the season and the farmers co-operated in a turkey-raising "bee," with the result that in the Fall they had several carloads of grasshopper-fed turkeys which sold at a nice profit and considerable crop was saved into the bargain.

Here is another proof, in a larger way, of what real co-operation can accomplish. Down in the extreme southwest section of Saskatchewan there are a few influential farmers who put leadership of progress before leadership of class; who realize that only a bastard relationship exists between our system of party politics and the basic economic problems of the country. The farmers of this territory had been promised a railway at the time they settled, but they waited for years in vain for fulfilment of political assurances. They were from 40 to 60 miles from an elevator. The limit of their patience reached, they decided they *must* have a railway or quit.

First, they organized the men and women of the district at a great mass meeting. All contributed something to the campaign pot. They compiled their local statistics carefully; then they sent out for one of Canada's well known consulting engineers and had plans and costs of

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a railway prepared at their own expense. They took these to the provincial and federal governments first, and demanded their support in approaching the railway company. They demonstrated to all and sundry that they had a real grievance, and also a real, practical proposition from the railway standpoint. They said to the company: "Either build this railway at once or we leave the country en bloc; we mean business; if the road is started we want the work kept up, summer and winter until it is completed; we're through with promises; we must have action."

They got the road; the smoke of the work trains was visible all the last winter. Other districts with equally as good arguments, with equally as urgent needs, are still without transportation—and thousands of settlers have simply quit the country cold, leaving land and implements to be realized upon by their creditors.

That's the kind of man-talk and co-operative initiative that governments and corporations understand—for they're human, after all, and are tremendously influenced by sane human assertiveness.

Many examples of what clean-cut co-operation will do could be enumerated. We shall have to content ourselves, however, with the citation of but one more incident.

When the severe droughts of 1918 and 1919 struck the southwest area of Saskatchewan and the southern areas of Alberta, a good many thinking, forward-looking settlers arrived at the conclusion that in striving for quick fortunes from bumper wheat crops they had neglected to provide themselves with a regular living. They were forced to realize that the rainfall, while ample on the average, very frequently did not come at the right time for wheat. They decided their methods were wrong. They discovered upon investigation and experiment that a couple of cows would supply a family with much food; that a couple of hogs would be kept for virtually nothing from the refuse about the place, and that the lowly barnyard fowl actually had an important place in the scheme of prairie existence.

These deliberations and experiments naturally suggested more intensive mixed farming, and the problem of suitable fodder crops for a dry territory arose. They determined to call a "dry farming congress" and prevailed upon the provincial government's agricultural department to assist. This was held at Swift Current in the summer of 1920, and it ultimately proved to be the greatest blessing that ever happened for the agricultural welfare of great areas in Saskatchewan and Alberta, for the latter province, also took a hand in the conference. At this congress experts were present from many sections of Canada, and the United States. There was brought to light all the available evidence, nationally and internationally, in connection with successful dry farming. The result is that today fodder crops and mixed farming are being carried on with a most remarkable success in localities where these ventures were almost totally unknown but a few years ago.

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FARMER WITH ADVANCED CONVICTIONS

IT was merely commonsense co-operation that turned the trick. George Spence, M.L.A., a really and truly "dirt" farmer, was one of the leaders in the energetic initiative referred to in Southwestern Saskatchewan. In a recent public address he said: "I despise those men who go up and down this country preaching class. The solution to the problems which confront the farmers on these prairies does not lie in clashing and fighting, but in constructive co-operation."

George Spence does not believe the farmers have a right to ask for any legislation as a special privilege to the farming interests at the expense of other legitimate interests. He believes the farmers are losing valuable ground by their anxiety for political control. He would like to see the political leaders of the agricultural class transfer their leadership into economic channels, letting the politicians alone to work out their own destiny, or have it worked out for them by sending only honest, four-square men to the legislative halls, irrespective of party affiliations. He said recently, in referring to the elevation of John Bracken to the premiership of Manitoba: "They have taken one of the foremost agricultural leaders and made of him a poor politician." And if the truth were known it is safe to say that he would much prefer Hon. Charlie Dunning in the role of a leader of Western agricultural economy than in his present role of premier of Saskatchewan, his agrarian abilities hedged in by a stockade of political defence.

Mr. Spence can see no reason why the farmer should be at loggerheads with the retailer, the manufacturer, the implement man or the banker. He recognizes that all have their parts to play, and that one cannot get along very well without the other. By coming together in intelligent counsel there are few misunderstandings but can be speedily overcome and dissolved into thin air. He believes also that only hard work will make two blades of grain grow instead of one, and that only hard work and sensible co-operation *from the farm outward* will solve our economic difficulties.

Nor are his ideas on co-operation of the penny-ante variety. In addressing a gathering of farmers not long ago he remarked, with a fine sarcasm in his Scotch brogue: "What a wonderful consistency it is to see farmers co-operate in launching mercantile enterprises to beat the grocer out of four cents on a box of prunes and two cents on a hundred-weight of sugar, when at the same time millions of dollars are being poured into the laps of the speculators because the farmer has not sense enough to efficiently co-operate in marketing the products he himself has grown upon his own land!"

Mr. Spence is an example of the practical farmer who has acquired a broad, practical economic outlook. May his tribe increase! Many like him are needed just now, for the average farmer who imagines all sorts of insidious plots when sound, sane economics are advanced for his welfare (and the nation's) by others, is perforce compelled to

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sit up and take notice when these advocacies come from the "dirt" farmers themselves.

Neither the farmer nor any other citizen engaged in earning a living in Canada should forget for a moment that we have got to go to the well of agriculture for the water of prosperity.

But if the farmer, who holds the keys to the well, allows the supply to be drained by a few non-productive parasites, then both he and the masses of the people will go on short rations.

CO-OPERATION IS THE CLARION CALL

THE day has now arrived when Western Canada must produce agricultural leaders who will not be swept off the rock of reason by the surge of a popular political wave; leaders who are capable of understanding that the need for legislation is only incidental, that the primary need of the prairie farmer is broad, comprehensive CO-OPERATION—co-operation in production, co-operation in distribution, co-operating in marketing. It is true that production must be largely an individual matter with the farmer, but if he can cut his threshing bill in half by co-operation, what is to prevent him from cutting his plowing and seeding bills away down through get-together methods? Why can't he make a weedy farm as unpopular as a skunk in the dairy room, and thus save for himself the millions of dollars it costs the Western farmer annually to grow weeds?

The tariff is a matter that has finally got to be solved by a mutual agreement and understanding between the farmers and the manufacturers. No sane, concerted action has ever been adopted in connection with the Canadian tariff, and there will never be a solution as long as senseless political sparring at long range continues. We do not purpose discussing the tariff question in this pamphlet, because of the reasons just stated. Here is something worth noting, however—

The farmers complain that the tariff cost them some \$9,000,000 in 1922; but never a word is said about the loss of \$150,000,000 to the farmers of Western Canada in 1922 through weeds.

One of the most appalling sights in the West is the number of farms where crop is literally drowned out by preventable weed growth. All the legislation from now to Kingdom Come will not solve the weed problem unless the farmers are prepared to co-operate systematically and with determination for its removal.

Reference has already been made to possibilities that lie at the hand of the farmer if he will co-operate in the matter of distribution of his products. Transportation facilities adequate to all present needs and to promote agricultural extension for new settlers are urgently required. So are the most direct routes to market at a minimum of freight cost. The importance of feasible water routes cannot be too strongly stressed. In these directions many more millions of dollars

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should go into the hands of the farmers-- and will go into the hands of the farmers as soon as they become alive to the potentialities of their latent economic powers.

In the matter of marketing the farmer is most visibly and sorely pressed. The market is the cashier of his industry, and he is face to face with its disappointments almost daily. By no stretch of the imagination can the most conservative agriculturalist argue marketing as an individual problem. It is essentially a group problem. Marketing of the Western grain crop cannot be accomplished without a thorough knowledge as to the market's demands, financial conditions and the conditions which surround all the elements of trade. These group business considerations stand boldly to the front. They can be met only by the farmers as a group handling their products through a highly specialized co-operative group channel. The farmer must have his district and provincial co-operative associations, with a central agency of his own experts handling the technical group details of the business.

If the farmer desires to get the most from his labors; if he wants to conduct his business on business-like lines, the same as a factory or a railway or a bank; if he wants to keep his sons on the farm by giving them a brighter, more profitable, happier outlook, then he has got to wake up and put workable, intelligent, intensive co-operation into actual practice. He has got to shake off the dream that political action is a fairy wand to waft away all his problems, and realize that co-operation is the principle which must surround his economic law. When that principle is recognized and applied the farmer will come to look upon politics as a mere incidental to the general administrative scheme of a nation. He will then gather in his sincere, honest leaders and set them to work preaching and applying the gospel of economic salvation *on the farm and outward from the farm*. All wealth is rooted in the soil, and from the soil must issue all real solutions to the problems emanating from the soil's productivity. Strongly entrenched upon solid, co-operative ground, and with all legitimate interests benefiting through discovery of the mother-lode of agricultural economy, even the strongest motives of party political expediency will fall down before the farmer's just demands.

What to do to hasten the day? That is the question.

* * * * *

SINCE the above was written a very happy and hopeful occurrence has taken place. Aaron Sapiro, America's outstanding voice on the economics of co-operative marketing, has come to the Western Provinces to assist in the organization of a voluntary contract wheat pool for handling the crop of 1923.

Mr. Sapiro has brought a message of plain common sense to the West. He has opened the eyes of a hundred thousand farmers already

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to the folly of direct political action as the remedy for the economic grievances of agriculture. He has not proposed to revolutionize existing business or business institutions. He has simply led the farmers to a point where they are apparently determined to stick together in methods for the more advantageous marketing of their grain, instead of the individual dumping of wheat on the market at harvest time with all the evils that accompany such grossly elemental and unprofitable procedure.

It is the earnest prayer of the great majority of the farmers of the West that they will be blessed by an abundant success in their wheat pool plans. This one season, with organization necessarily hurried, will not be a fair test.

But it will be a fair start!

It is claimed as the most portentous move ever made by the Western farmer for economic deliverance. And, best of all, politics is being discarded altogether in the action now being consummated

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LET the bigger, broader, better Canadianism assert itself today as never before. We all have a duty to perform. Let us study present conditions with sincerity and comprehension; let us talk intelligently about the New Day of Economic Progress in Western Canada.

If good results—and good must ultimately result in an extent as yet undreamed—then Eastern Canada will be just as pronouncedly affected as Western Canada, for the East is the source of supply for both money and goods. The farmer has got to be changed from a debt contractor to a debt payer; from a buyer of bare necessities to the estate of an owner of comforts and a few luxuries.

Let us be constructive—in favor of Progress, People! Let the advantages and possibilities of the new era of Western Economic initiative be acclaimed in the press, pulpit and platform of the East. Let it be discussed in the school, the home, the office, the club, the factory, the shop, the street—wherever two or three are gathered together.

That's the way to get the wave of prosperity moving,—give it effective motive power.

PROSPERITY MUST COME FROM THE WEST

IS the West Worth While?

Lift the Agricultural industry of the West out of Canada's wealth and resources, and where does our hope for national stability and national expansion lie? Take the Western farmer out of the Eastern buying market and there will be a rude awakening in the direction of the rising sun.

Do our great Eastern financial institutions think Western Canada is worth while? Do our implement and automobile manufacturers

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want to see the West flourish and prosper? Do our great factories and abattoirs, our thousands of wholesalers, jobbers and retailers, East and West, think that Western Canada is worth while?

Yes; the business interests of the Dominion must have Western Canada—not a halting, stumbling, misguided West of strife and indecision and meagre growth and development, but rather a West of vigorous, healthy, assertive progress, abounding in the faith and confidence of achievement and success that are born of economic understanding.

Such being the case, it is obviously the duty of all interests to get busy—to join together in one great national co-operative enterprise for elevating economic agricultural progress to the throne of Western Canada. Under the beneficence of such sceptred sway there will be no barriers to a harmonious, united citizenship walking hand in hand towards the rising sun of Prosperity and Peace.

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MUCH has been said about the moves the farmer has got to initiate off his own bat. But it cannot be too forcibly reiterated that this is everybody's battle. Both the farmers and the general business interests of the country have got to come together to recognize the mutual welfare that is at stake.

It is imperative that the agricultural leaders of the West and the leaders of the manufacturing, railway, banking and commercial interests of the East get together on common ground for a common understanding for the common good.

We have seen that when confronted by a grave economic situation a band of settlers in southwest Saskatchewan arranged a conference to bring about solutions to their dry farming problems. Let us start off by taking a pattern after their methods. Let us have some bang-up East-and-West conferences, with the politicians absolutely barred. Canada could well dispense with many of its clubs and societies in favor of one gigantic Canadian Association of National Development.

The best brains of the country will be none too weighty for the problems to be tackled. First of all let there be a good feeling engendered. We've been too unsociable. Let's walk down the same side of the street, side by side, for a time. After all, this matter of developing the West is a great big partnership affair. "I know the West is there, but I don't know anything about its needs or its possibilities," was the frank remark of a well-known Toronto business man recently.

O, yes, we have trade deputations, political junketing, editorial associations and other combinations visit the West occasionally; but there is little real enlightenment gathered by such parties. They only hit the high spots, only confer with select gatherings in urban centres. They never get to the core of the problem; they never get out on the bald prairie and see things as they are. It is unnecessary to elaborate

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on this. You remember what proved to be the most significant feature of the Western jaunt of Sir Henry Thornton!

Give us a combination of the sincere efforts of agriculture leaders of economic progress working in accord with the best business brains of the country for a common end, namely, agricultural prosperity, and no one need to worry about who goes to Parliament. That is a little matter which will right itself in good time, for, with the fundamentals of progress working overtime and full speed ahead, the settlers of the West and the denizens of the East will mighty soon see to it that there is plenty of tempered steel sent to the legislative halls to stiffen the vertebra of the professional politicians. The fallacy of class politics and a lot of other popular fallacies that do not get us anywhere have got to be thrown overboard. What is needed, what we must have, is less useless legislation and more personal and collective initiative on a business basis, more co-operation between farm and factory heads.

There are two vital forces in economic relationship to agricultural Canada—the producer and the consumer. What stands between the two is superfluous, illogical, harmful, and wasteful. Nor is it of any solid substance. A good strong puff from either of the vital ends would obliterate the seeming mountain of obstacle. But as the producer is the positive creating force, it is up to him to start the puffing—the consumer will be found a ready, reliable ally.

But a puff of partisan or-class votes have no economic force. They cannot take the place of real work, no matter what the opportunist leaders may say. It is largely the lack of incentive for real work that is responsible for the world's upheaval today. People and nations want to gain wealth and power without work.

It Can Not Be Done!

VITAL IMPORTANCE OF THE HOME MARKET TO THE FARMER

IN the foregoing we have endeavored to show that laws alone will never create prosperity—that we cannot successfully legislate wealth into one another's pockets. We've got to work for what we get, and we've got to work with our heads as well as with our hands. That is, we must apply the utmost of intelligence to our toil and its perplexities in order to obtain maximum returns therefrom. This is true of every sphere of activity. It is particularly true in connection with agricultural enterprise in Western Canada.

Perhaps there is no word in the lexicon of the West that is repeated with greater frequency than the little word "Markets." Usually about the only conception attached to the word is that it sums up the price that the farmer is to be paid for his grain when he unloads it at the elevator.

However, to any close student of the situation today in the West it is a matter of the keenest gratification that the man on the farm is

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at last beginning to realize the importance of the Home market, as represented by the wider national community, for his products.

In the days when wheat growing was practically the only industry of the prairie settler, his sole concern was the state of affairs in the grain-consuming countries of Europe, and the bids offering for wheat on the Liverpool market. The percentage of his crop disposed of in the Dominion was very meagre. Now, however, that great strides have been made the past few years in the direction of mixed farming, the forward-looking husbandman is beginning to be concerned about the disposal of his diversified products closer home.

In the opinion of the writer, it cannot be emphasized too strongly that herein lies one of the most practical and positive avenues leading to the improved conditions and better times that are being so prayerfully sought.

The question of home markets and how these can be broadened is something of the utmost fundamental importance, and any efforts made towards expanding and developing them should have the utmost of encouragement from all available sources. More and more should the farmers of the West explore the possibilities that are presented to them in this direction.

We have previously set forth that there was need for more intimate relationships between East and West; that Western difficulties as they exist in the outlying settlements must be more closely visualized by the business interests of the East. It is equally true, of course, that the farmers of the prairies and the citizens of Western Canada at large must seek to create just as intimate understandings of Eastern difficulties and Eastern enterprises.

This is an obvious position, a self-evident fact. The economic outlook in Canada is a thing of mutual concern. Despite what radicals and extremists generally may say the agricultural interests of the West and the business interests of the country at large—East and West—are absolutely interdependent. Any other position is fallacious, unsound and mischievous.

A careful analysis of home market conditions and what these mean to the profitable development of agriculture should be seriously, studiously considered by every farmer. This market can be enlarged and made more profitable to the farmer by his loyalty to Canadian-made products, and thus increasing the employment of labor in the country that consumes the goods the farmer grows.

Some brief government statistics, recently published by the Department of Labor will prove interesting reading. It is shown that among the articles consumed annually by those engaged in industrial occupations in Canada, are the following: 260,000,000 pounds of meat, 52,000,000 dozen eggs; 39,000,000 gallons of milk, 195,000 tons of bread, 78,000,000 pounds of butter and 13,000,000

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bushels of potatoes. These are just a few of the staple items, but they are sufficient to indicate that the 3,000,000 Canadians dependent upon manufacturing pursuits for their livelihood are a factor that must by no means be overlooked in reckoning up those things which go to comprise the stability and potentialities of the nation. If their numbers were six millions instead of three it is not difficult to understand what an additional tremendous buying power would be created for the products of the farm.

The West is a land of hope eternal. The lure of increased development—of waste places made productive and sightly and golden—supplies the incentive to the settler. He has withstood hardship and adversity, and is still enduring them, that his dreams may come true and his faith justified. As a rule the Western settler is as broad and generous as the prairie upon which he toils; but the natural reach of his economic vision has been to a great extent constricted through the designing schemes of political advisers more concerned about acquiring office, and retaining power than they are about the actual welfare of the man upon the soil and the development of the agricultural industry.

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AS previously stated in these pages it is the broader Canadianism that must prevail if prosperity is to be made unanimous. We must build up Canada as a whole; we must build up agriculture; we must build up manufacturing; we must build up mineral exploration and development.

And to successfully build up Canada as a whole—to bring our great variety of natural wealth and resources up to the highest standard and the maximum output—we have got to be true to all that makes for Canadian development. East and West, we have got to support, as individual citizens, the industries upon which our national life depends. We cannot say "Up with the agricultural industry and down with the manufacturing industry;" nor can we say "Up with the manufacturing industry and down with the agricultural industry." What we should and must say, if our desired destiny is to materialise, is: "Forward, Canada!"

Referring again to recent government statistics, we find that for the month of June, 1923, merchandise imported from the United States for consumption in Canada amounted to \$55,866,540, while Canadian exports to the United States for the same month amounted to \$35,869,663. For the three months ending June, 1923, imports from the United States amounted to \$161,693,210, while our exports to the States were \$99,385,478.

It should be the aim of every ambitious Canadian to reverse these figures at the earliest possible moment. It should be the aim of every farmer in Western Canada, as well as every other citizen of the country, to intensify a national spirit that will work for constant improvement in the home buying market and the foreign selling market. Let Canada's raw materials be manufactured at home and export-

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ted abroad. These are actual, real, positive things which will go a long way towards solving the difficulties which bestrew the path of the economic highway of Canada.

Efforts have been made in the West of recent months to argue out of existence such conditions as those represented by the "Law of Supply and Demand;" but the most elemental study of trade operations should give us conclusive proof that if the three million work-people of industrial Canada were eliminated from the purchasing market for farm produce, there would be millions of dollars' worth of goods that would have no market value whatever in the country.

But it is unnecessary to enlarge upon what must be apparent to all thinking minds—the interdependence of all vital forces in the nation. In particular there is the closest possible economic alliance existing between the industry of agriculture and the industry of manufacture. These are the industries that have billions of dollars at stake in the national life, and they both must be consistently prosperous or it is impossible that the country can be prosperous.

CAPITAL SHOULD BE ATTRACTED NOT DISCOURAGED

NO discussion of the economic situation in Western Canada would be complete without some reference to the capital requirements for development purposes.

One would imagine, with the millions of acres of excellent virgin land only awaiting the plow to produce a golden flow of new wealth for the nation's benefit, that no stone would be left unturned in the endeavor to provide the capital that is required for improvements, expansion in the way of mixed farming, etc.

Yet what is the condition that exists today in the West?

All during the stressful pioneering days the now-established settlers were financed through the incorporated loan companies and the banks. The loan and mortgage institutions found practically all the money for the long-term borrowings, while the banks confined their attention almost exclusively to short-term arrangements.

Today we find that the provincial governments have, for reason of political expediency, embarked in the loan business at a tremendous cost to the taxpayer. What is worse, however, certain tactics have been adopted which have practically compelled the loan companies, for their own protection, to steer clear of the Western farm loans market.

Alberta has a moratorium law in existence whereby it is practically impossible for the loan companies to recover from a client, no matter how glaring the incompetence or breach of trust on the part of said client.

Saskatchewan, while having no actual moratorium legislation, is continually threatening to introduce such a measure. The result is that in these two provinces there has been very little money available from the recognized loan corporations for agricultural development.

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Government Loans were introduced primarily from the standpoint of political advantage, and subsequently operated with the political steering-gear more or less in evidence. Both in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, where farm loan schemes are in vogue, the business has proved extremely unprofitable for the taxpayers. Deficits have piled up and dissatisfaction with the modus operandi is very frequently and very forcibly expressed:

This entering of the financial loaning field by the western politicians has in reality turned out to be a piece of economic demoralization, instead of the great general salvation to the pursuit agricultural that was so fervently promised by the political leaders. Bad debts have accumulated which, added to excessive administration costs, present total deficits which would long since have put any private concern into bankruptcy.

These deficits, of course, have got to be made up. The result is an additional tax burden both upon the farmers themselves and upon urban enterprise. At that the very limited number of settlers who could benefit by the government rural credit schemes, owing to the restricted capital available, makes governmental entry in this field absurd and farcical when the needs of the West are considered in terms of its ultimate aggressive development.

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PERHAPS the worst feature about the entry of the Western governments in the farm loan business is the two-fold lack of confidence that is fostered. Not openly, perhaps, but insidiously, the farmer is led to believe by his friends the politicians that the established financial concerns of the country are out to bleed him dry. And on their part the private loan corporations are forced to conclude that the governments are in active opposition to them and their legitimate, incorporated financial enterprises. These companies, not being actively engaged in politics, and having no heelers for lobbying, or large blocks of voters to deliver at the polls on election day, are forced to retire from the loaning field of the West and divert their resources into other more reasonable and profitable channels.

What a lamentable state of affairs! By their own actions in political pandering the governments of the prairie provinces themselves have proved a very serious deterrent to progressive agriculture; a foe to constructive business enterprise, without whose funds Western agriculture would be in no sense developed as it is today; and themselves the instigators of a senseless class feeling that is doing untold harm in Canada, a canker that if not stamped out very speedily will eat its way to the very heart of our vital institutions.

What a short-sighted administration vision it is that holds one hand outstretched for the boons of peace, progress and prosperity, while with the other it scatters broadcast the seeds of dissention and distrust, suspicion and stagnation!

By all means let there be wise and just regulations governing loans and banking so that the farmer is given ample protection against

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any possible exploitation on the part of the unscrupulous; but to say inferentially that the reputable financial concerns which have supplied the original capital for the development of the West, and for the development of large, constructive enterprises everywhere, should be shut out of their legitimate business in the broad Western field that so sorely needs ready money, is one of the most fallacious and destructive policies that was ever uttered by the political propagandists. These seem determined to retain power in the West even at the country's direst economic sacrifice. It is doubtful, however, if the farmers will continue to be humbugged much longer.

While the writer holds no briefs for the financial concerns, he is deeply convinced that there is a lot of ignorant twaddle broadcasted today about Capital, and that the country is being seriously handicapped thereby. The money that is handled by the loan corporations, whether by mortgages, debentures, or other collateral is made up of accumulated "widows' mites"—it is the savings of the people at large which are put to work. If reasonable returns cannot be realized from these investments, then the source of money supply must perforce close its purse strings, and productive development must cease.

Only a couple of years ago a market was sought in Western Canada for many millions of dollars of surplus savings from Holland. The conditions were such, however, through the barriers erected by the western provincial governments, that interest returns would be uncertain. The money was then withdrawn from Canada and diverted to the United States. The Holland people were not anxious to see the principal of this money again; but they wanted assurance that it would be safe and would pay its interest regularly. The West could not give that assurance, thanks to the politicians and their toy farm-lending department.

What a shameful, senseless way to treat capital in a new country whose future progress depends primarily upon the availability of working investments.

Herein lies another of the reasons why it is most pertinent and timely to ask and to answer the question: "Is the West Worth While?"

GET BUSY FOR SOUND PROGRESS

THE farmer's immediate work is cut out for him in the necessity that is present and calling, ever calling, for the exercise of his powerful economic force on something tangible and real, vital and important. Let him forget the trivial and the silly and the abortive. Above all, let him steer shy of the political boomerang.

I have no faith in the oft-heard theory that "the farmers can never stick together for economic action in Western Canada." That is just another siren call to steer the agricultural barque away from the harbor of safety, from the guidepost of progress, from the lighthouse of co-operation. There will, of course, always be a lot of hardshells whose minds are crystalized, who have hardening of the arteries

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of initiative; but there are plenty of our agriculturists capable of "carrying the message to Garcia." That they should have the loyal and energetic support of business heads generally, both in the West and in the East, goes without saying. Another thing, the professors of economy in the agricultural colleges throughout the land should make some drastic, far-sighted changes in their curriculum. The youth of the farms must be educated in personal economic initiative or they are not educated at all.

There are many things requiring attention in Western Canada, if the West is to be developed, Canada's population increased, and general business prosperity stimulated throughout the land.

Some of these things causing major concern may be very concisely enumerated as follows, without regard to the order of importance:

1. Agricultural economic leadership to supplant agricultural political leadership.
2. Intensive organization for co-operative production, distribution and marketing, with approved associations in each province co-ordinating with a national selling agency—these of course to be the farmers' organizations.
3. A business survey by business heads and co-operative farm leaders on the problems of freight and transportation.
4. An intensive survey of coal, oil, pulp and other natural resources requiring development and marketing improvements to the end that these may provide national revenue, and thus relieve oppressive taxation.
5. A systematic charting of those sections of the West where it is advisable to settle new immigrants with fair assurance they will make good.
6. A continuation, with gradually broadening scope, of the Better Farming Congresses throughout the prairies, with the end in view that diversified farming be more intensively developed in what is considered the "dry areas," and necessary information at hand when the time comes that much wheat land at present cultivated will have to be enriched for successful crop rotations.
7. Supreme attention to branch line railway construction for opening up new productive territory and thus increasing Western agricultural production, which, in turn, will increase Eastern manufacturing, add to the national wealth and tend to lower national taxation.
8. The exercise of vastly greater business acumen in the matter of immigration, a department in which large sums are wasted, when many times the actual results for permanent settlement could be obtained at a fraction of the cost were capable advisers retained to guide the course of the government in this very vital direction. Immigration expenditures in work and money of the past few years has done the country more harm than good, a fact that will astonish the

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lay citizen whose concern for the nation's welfare ends when he tosses aside his daily newspaper.

9. Adoption of every ounce of effort possible on the part of clubs and societies of various kinds to establish a closer relationship between East and West on the grounds of economic improvements, advanced understanding of mutual relationships and conditions, and intensive promotion of the patriotic urge for a united, prosperous Canada.

These nine outstanding requirements are all interwoven the one with the other. They constitute the warp and woof of Western Canada's so-called problems. It is worth while spending time and money on a thorough, intelligent acquaintanceship with these problems—problems that are entirely economic and in no sense contentious or political?

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The sun is no surer of rising in the Eastern sky tomorrow morning than is it certain that without a united national effort to effect practical solutions and friendly understandings there can be no stability of Western agricultural enterprise, no extensive development of our resources, no appreciable increases in our population.

There must be no further dilly-dallying in the matter of national co-operative action. The East and the West have got to join hands; the geographical barriers must be battered down by the logic and reason of our mutual material interests, to say nothing of the patriotic ties which should bind our country together from ocean to ocean in one harmonious unit of virile, aggressive, loyal and lovable Canadianism.

To this end there must be a general, wide-spread interest aroused as to causes which are responsible for the grave unrest and cankerous suspicions which maintain today West of the Great Lakes.

The people at large have got to know the truth about the troubles which harass them. The Western farmer has got to understand he has a part to perform equally as vital as the part that must be performed by Eastern business interests and by the Dominion Parliament.

The masses of the people do not realize these things, or they do not see them in their true perspective. They get one side of an argument developed into a lop-sided prejudice. It is time that Reason was straightened out so that it bears an intelligent relationship to all fundamental issues.

It is the duty of every sincere, progressive, patriotic Canadian to do his utmost in spreading fact and logic among all classes of the people, to the end that the shackles of political and social prejudices may be struck off, our mutual interests and mutual responsibilities revealed, and the mani-

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best job that lies ahead undertaken with faith, freedom and fervor.

* * * * *

I DO not know of very many professional pessimists in Western Canada. You may rest assured, as has been intimated earlier, there is pretty good reason for any wailing that goes forth. An absolutely, incorrect diagnosis of the trouble may prevail; but whatever the cause, depend upon it the trouble is there. After twenty years' residence in the West, and in a position to view things behind the scenes, the writer is well aware that one of the deterrent factors to Western Canada progress is the tendency of professional optimists to underrate real conditions. That these received a sever set-back during the drought years was a blessing in disguise. Given a good crop, you hear one harmonious chorus of optimism about the West, from Vancouver to Halifax. The impression is handed out over the news wires, in the financial reports and in directors' meetings, that all is smooth sailing in the West. The professional optimists manage to submerge deep-rooted troubles in one wild and frothy wave of enthusiastic optimism.

Remember, I like optimism—in reason; but the brightness of a good crop should not be allowed to completely overshadow the dross beneath the surface—the blight that will spread, as it is now spreading until the whole fabric of the agricultural industry is in danger of disintegration because of economic inactivity in relation to fundamentals. Sane optimism, in the form of faith and hope, have been of tremendous importance in keeping the West strong, energetic, resourceful in a hundred ways in the face of dire adversity; but who can ignore the dark side of the picture when he sees thousands of discouraged settlers departing for the United States and elsewhere because the limit of their patience and endurance was reached? Who can credit the sanity of the "optimist" who, when a fire is raging, smilingly gazes upon the concrete foundation and says—"Thank heaven, that cannot burn!" Few of us but would prefer the arrant pessimist who rushes to turn in a fire alarm so that the conflagration may not spread.

There is nothing finer than the true spirit of optimism, but sometimes incurable laziness or indifference is foisted upon the public in the sacred name of optimism, and sometimes a selfishness that will glory in national calamity, if it means personal profit, is loud on the hallelujah note—like the camp follower who plucks gold from the teeth of dead warriors.

NO SENSE IN SIDESTEPPING THE ISSUES

WE'VE been sidestepping the real issues long enough. If we have the desire to know the truth and the courage to face facts, and then start to work with practical intelligence and unswerving determination for the removal of obstacles, it will be no longer necessary to ask the question: "Is the West Worth While?" No longer will the

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discordant note of separation from the East be heard in the West; but the West will understand that, with the friendly co-operative assistance of Eastern brains, it can start an initiative at work that will evolve solutions to Western problems and effect an enduring bond of sympathy and unity.

In order for any nation to grow and prosper, situated as Canada is situated with millions of acres of fertile farm lands and natural resources of forest and mine and stream beyond mathematical calculation, it must have more people, more production, more capital.

These spell prosperity, growth, development; but these boons will not be showered upon us unless we remove the cause of stagnation and speed up on personal and collective initiative.

When it is plainly evident that stagnation in the matter of development exists in the Prairie Provinces; when our official statistics prove conclusively that there are fewer people on the farms of the prairies today than there were five years ago, surely it is high time to make a move on behalf of Canada!

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HERE'S a rather remarkable thing:

We send Dominion of Canada representatives to economic conferences at centres of continental Europe; we send them to Empire conferences at London; we send them to League of Nations conferences; we send them to innumerable trade conferences all over the globe—

But there has never yet been held in Canada a conference to discuss the most vital piece of national welfare policy with which this country was ever faced, or probably ever will be faced—we have never held a conference to get down to brass tacks upon the economic estrangement that exists between the East and West.

We are perfectly willing to assist in the solution of the controversies that rage throughout Europe; we are perfectly willing to devote our abilities to the solution of the problems of Britain and the British Empire at large—but we seem perfectly content to see our own country, the land of our birth or adoption, complacently marking time to the tune of vast foreign inroads upon our vital and material resources.

At the last session of parliament whole days on end were consumed in a debate upon the trade treaty with France; but not a minute was spent in advancing practical plans for overcoming the barriers of obstruction which are responsible for "East" and "West" being considered as two distinct economic and political entities in this country, instead of all the interests of each extreme being united in the common cause of a Greater Dominion of Canada.

The Thing which is blocking the pathway to that most desirable national destiny is Indifference. Politicians and the

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people are too busy with more important affairs such as the Turkish boundary and the earthquake in Peru.

In Canada there are dozens of League of Nations societies; but who has the hardihood to get on his hind legs and holler for a league of East-and-West unions strung across the country from Vancouver to Halifax?

INTENSIVE STUDY AND ACTION DEMANDED

Let us take a look around. Let us study very religiously the outstanding requirements which have just been set forth.

Why should thousands of our good settlers have been permitted to leave Western Canada because of no attention being paid to branch lines when millions of dollars are being frittered away at Ottawa on fairy enterprises from which no economic returns may be reasonably expected? Do we sincerely wish Canada to grow—or are we content to slip back?

What about freight rates on the Great Lakes? If we can save several cents a bushel on wheat by deepening the St. Lawrence canals, and without a dollar of added taxation to the country, who is there to say that a united front will not bring about that wonderful project for the nation's greater progress and development? Then there is the Western outlet that needs attention as well so that a continuous wheat freight business can be successfully and cheaply carried on summer and winter, thus solving the great problem of distribution, and lowering the cost of bringing commodities, from the East, from Europe and from the Orient, or wherever it is we find favorable trade!

And marketing? That gigantic drain upon the farmers' profits! Why should the farmer leave millions of dollars profit annually at half-way, privately-owned selling stations when he can do his own marketing quite easily and securely and save all these millions? The wheat pool will ultimately furnish a satisfactory answer here.

Why, again, should it cost the farmer double to produce what he does when co-operative production would take from a third to a half from the expense of this initial end of his business?

And why, in the name of High Heaven, should the farmer throw his hat into the political ring, when he is a suppliant at the feet of economic initiative for every stitch that he wears? Politics will soon rob him of his trousers and his shirt, as well as his hat!

So far as the farmer is concerned Failure is a word that was placed in the dictionary to fill up space.

But confession comes before salvation. Let us acknowledge our faults, realize where they lie and understand that only intelligent,

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co-operative WORK will bring us absolution, and establish that more pleasing and portentous word, SUCCESS, upon sentry-go!

All interests, of course, have got to work hand-in-hand for the rejuvenation of Canada's industrial and social and patriotic outlook. The press of the country will find here a field for the highest form of service that this great moulder of public opinion can render to the Canadian nation. Let it be hoped that a broad and magnanimous spirit will prevail in this direction.

Who will help to make Western Canada worth while? Who will join in the crusade for hastening this Dominion on the great forward march to its ultimate destiny as one of the most prosperous and peaceful nations of the earth?

Who will help to uncover the economic leaders who will devote their energies towards working out that destiny and solve our seemingly insoluble problems? With these problems properly approached and dealt with there will be no need to spend millions on immigration propaganda. Let us at home, on the farm, in the office and factory and counting house, start building upon the solid foundations of progressive economy—then there will swarm to our vacant lands, from the republic to the south and from over the seven seas, all the immigrants we care to accept.

Uncounted millions will KNOW Western Canada is worth while—will WANT Western Canada—just as soon as we demonstrate to them that there is the right brand of hospitality behind our invitation—the kind that assures them a reasonable and uniform prosperity.

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LET it be stressed in conclusion, that every man and woman in our beloved Dominion has a part to play, a duty to perform, in hastening that joyous day when the vision of the Fathers of Confederation over half a century ago will be brought to a fruitful reality; when the agriculturalists of the West, and the big business interests of the East will be actuated by impulses of co-operation, goodwill, trustworthiness, loyalty and a common standard of ethics in the development of the world's most marvelous hinterland.

With her latent natural wealth to provide bountifully for millions more of the world's humans, with a virile posterity reared in a land that breeds strength; courage, faith and democracy, there can be no question of the glorious future awaiting Canada. God has given no greater, no nobler heritage to any people since time began. He has also given us pride of race and strength of mind—two attributes which will rise supreme and unite our sons of the East and the West in a common brotherhood to overcome the discord of misunderstanding and dissention that has momentarily opened a gap for common sense to bridge.

Upon us of the present day devolves the duty of consummation. It is our move in the heroic game of nation-building. Shall that move

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be made? For answer we have but to turn to our brilliant history, to the valiant deeds of our pioneering forebears. These, and the love of country that is as dominating an influence today as it was in the priceless past, will beckon us on and on to the imperishable heights of achievement and victory.

But, let the batteries of economic energy and co-operative goodwill be turned on to the maximum voltage.

There is no study for any Canadian today, old or young, like the study of the resources and possibilities of the Golden West, where there is, under proper economic conditions to warrant development and production, room for uncounted millions of workers, home builders, nation builders.

Here, where lies the potential home for double our present Dominion population in the next decade, is a land to study and know if we but have the will to make Canada a nation among nations.

You can make the West Worth While!